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ABSTRACT

This bulletin is the sixth in a series that provides information on a collaborative project known as MainFrame to develop youth training programs in Great Britain. It describes the assessment procedures used in the youth training programs and examines project progress toward its main objective--the development of a unit credit transfer system--and its relationship to national developments on certification. The bulletin is organized in three sections. The section on assessment describes the Training Inventory form on which is recorded trainee progress, as well as on-the-job and off-the-job training assessment. Next, a section on accreditation focuses on development of a package to accredit trainees for their prior learning and establishment of a unit credit transfer system. The section on certification discusses attempts at articulation with existing schemes to achieve the aim of offering "credible certification" through a unit credit transfer system. A concluding commentary critiques the project's achievements, especially as regards investment of resources. Sample forms are provided. (YLB)

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TWO-YEAR YOUTH TRAINING SCHEMES

An evaluation of LEA modular programmes

No. 6 January 1989 *ISBN 1 85338 098 7*

ASSESSMENT, ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

An evaluation of LEA-managed, modular, two-year Youth Training Schemes (YTS) is being carried out by FEU. This research project (RP3019) focuses on a collaborative project between Bedfordshire, Hackney and Sheffield LEAs as they develop their training programmes within their localities. Since the beginning of the evaluation, the project has been joined by Liverpool LEA and the Wirral Metropolitan College and is now known as MainFrame.

This sixth in a series of bulletins describes the assessment procedures used by the MainFrame partners and examines its progress towards its main objective – the development of a unit credit transfer system – as well as its relationship to national developments on certification. These are key areas for those concerned to implement a modular curriculum and a related system of accreditation.

Assessment

As outlined in previous bulletins, the MainFrame project has been working to develop a modular curriculum for YTS. The modules consist of a double-sided A4 sheet (see Figure 1 at the end of this bulletin). Each trainee's programme, as described in *Bulletin No.3*, is negotiated and the most appropriate modules to cover both off- and on-the-job training are selected from a bank of, at the moment, about 1200 modules. The number in each trainee's programme varies according to the scheme and individual training needs. Typically, however, trainees are not expected to cover more than 40 modules during their two-year training. The number of modules given to each trainee and added to the programme is recorded on the *Training Inventory* (see Figure 2 at the end of this bulletin). This record is supplemented with information about:

- ***Type of Module***
  There are three types:
  - General
  - General vocational
  - Specific vocational

- ***Programme Purposes***
  There are seven defined programme purposes:
  - Induction and initial assessment
  - Foundation of education
  - Role execution
  - Theory underlying practice
  - Skills development
  - Transfer
  - Integration

- ***Level of Module***
  1 – Pre-vocational
  2 – Part craft
  3 – Full craft, part technician
  4 – Full technician

Whether the module is for use in on- or off-the-job training is recorded, together with the dates on which it started and ended. Importantly, the level at which the module is awarded is also recorded. This is one of four:

I – Needs further experience
II – Able under close supervision
III– Able under general supervision
IV– Competent unaided

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The procedure under which trainees are assessed on each module is currently being reviewed. The FEU evaluation interim report (summarised in *Bulletin No.4*) discovered a wide variation in practice, both across and within the three LEAs. As a consequence, the project is reviewing the basis upon which each trainee is credited with a module. At the time of the research, the criterion was that the trainee should demonstrate achievement at level II (being competent under close supervision) or above in a minimum of 75% of the competence statements on that module. However, a new approach is being developed whereby the number of competence statements on each module is reduced to those considered essential to achieve competence in the particular task; therefore all competence statements will need to be achieved.

The process by which assessments are recorded on the module sheets also showed some variation, particularly between on- and off-the-job training. This variation is found within as well as across the MainFrame collaborative project; a working party has been set up to attempt to introduce more standardisation into the procedures through staff development programmes. There is evidence in the FEU research that the assessment of competence in both on- and off-the-job training remains, like most forms of assessment, subjective in spite of using detailed competence objectives. Primarily, the trainee is assessed through observation in and questioning of daily practice, though there are examples to show that specific tests and projects are devised for assessment purposes.

On-the-job training assessment

The most commonly reported practice in on-the-job training was the negotiation of progress made by trainees – between the trainee, the workplace supervisor and the liaison officer – during the quarterly review meeting. During these reviews, typically, a trainee would have marked up progress on one set of modules and the supervisor on another. The liaison officer would ensure that an agreed level of achievement was marked on another set of modules, to be transferred to the *Training Inventory*. This review meeting also negotiated the progress made by trainees on core skills, transfer of skills and personal effectiveness. If trainees had identified weaknesses, or work placements had failed to provide them with opportunities for achievement of competences, these were indicated for future action and recorded on the Training Agency Review Sheet (TFS93). Generally, these discussions on progress and achievement of competence were preceded by assessment based on observations and questioning, although there were instances where workplace supervisors set specific projects to test the achievement of skills. FEU research indicated some difficulties supervisors had in recognising and measuring the achievement of skill, though it was generally felt that the assessment procedure was effective.

The MainFrame partners have been collaborating on a project with City and Guilds, using DACUM procedures to distil the essential competences required to perform job roles in six occupational areas (see *Bulletin No.2*):

- Hairdressing
- Caring
- Leisure and recreation
- Retail and warehousing
- Electrical engineering
- Information technology

The derived work-based modules provide the model for all modules within the MainFrame module bank. The main difference, apart from modules no longer needing to be of a standard number of competence statements, is that they now contain an overall competence objective. On the back of the module sheets are listed performance criteria relevant to the achievement of the competence objective, the relevant core skills, and the knowledge necessary to perform the task. This may be one possible strategy for reducing the degree of subjectivity in the assessment of performance.

A separate assessment is made of personal effectiveness, using an inventory. FEU research found that the inventory was not received very well by employers, trainees or staff who had to complete it. Subsequently, the MainFrame project set up a working group to revise this personal effectiveness inventory, taking into account criticisms made of the previous one (mainly to do with the inconsistency in format and irrelevance of the personal effective statements for occupations outside retailing). The new personal effectiveness inventory has been much more favourably received by trainees, staff and employers, although some are still critical that this forms a separate assessment rather than being integral to the modular system.

Off-the-job training assessment

FEU research shows that the modules are less used in off-the-job training for assessment. Typically, the modules are marked up by college staff, but they do not appear to do this regularly. This is particularly the case when college staff are following a national qualification course where the demands of the assessment requirements of the validating bodies are given primacy rather than the training modules.

Where these modules have been chosen because of their relevance to the examination course (and in many cases the modules have been derived from such courses) this does not pose too much of a problem, but college staff do not always appreciate the need to complete module assessment procedures for students who have been entered for these national qualifications. The tendency is to complete the modules at the end of the year rather than regularly update them.

Typically, core skills attainment is also assessed in the off-the-job training site. This is usually done by college tutors, using a core skills checklist very similar to that used in CPVE. On the newer modules, a core skills task analysis is done in advance on each module, and a cross-reference with the checklist is included on the back of each module. This may be done on either an individual or a group basis, and the information is provided for the liaison officer to transfer to the trainees' central record of achievement, the *Training Inventory*.

This central record (see Figure 2) has been developed as a response to FEU findings concerning the lack of integration between various parts of the scheme and their assessment, and the amount of paperwork. Although it is not yet clear whether the *Training Inventory* will be successful in reducing the amount of paperwork, it has already been well received by liaison officers as it facilitates the development of a coherent, balanced and integrated programme for each trainee. Constituting a central record, it will also facilitate the completion of the YTS Certificate as the information on assessment required will be collected continuously on the *Training Inventory*.

In the case of trainees with special learning needs, the modules have a greater significance, particularly if the trainees are not entered for national qualifications and the YTS Certificate is likely to be the only form of credit they take away from the scheme. In some of these cases, the off-the-job sites also provide work experience training or, alternatively, the workshops, projects or schemes which provide work experience are also the site for the off-the-job training. In these cases, the modules are used more regularly and centrally as the focus of a trainee's programme, including assessment.

Accreditation

Three objectives of the MainFrame project are:

- to incorporate units of credit within a credit transfer system;
- to incorporate specified national standards;
- to offer credible certification.

In addition, the project has developed a package which will seek to accredit trainees for their prior learning. This has yet to be fully tested, but it is hoped that this package, along with modules and the *Training Inventory*, will be applicable beyond YTS. Bedfordshire is currently piloting MainFrame materials in Employment Training. One of the partners, Haringey, is undertaking a project on the embedding of MainFrame materials in work-related non-advanced further education (WRNAFE), specifically within TOCs A, B, C and K, to offer flexibility in terms of access, progression through courses and both lateral and vertical development. In addition, there is within the same authority a youth development project which is seeking to break down the barriers between academic and vocational barriers. Haringey is providing, for example, a course in Print Journalism that will combine both GCE 'A' levels and City and Guilds qualifications. Liverpool and Wirral are now working jointly to combine academic and vocational qualifications in a programme.

In order to establish a unit credit transfer system, the project requires a common currency, and this lies in the MainFrame modular format. As previously outlined, this modular system is based on competence statements which permit the recognition and separate accreditation of both useful achievement and experience. This enables trainees to acquire either a full vocational qualification or to obtain credits towards such a qualification.

There has been some discussion in the past about the need for that 75% to include statements considered essential, for example those which cover Health and Safety, but there is no evidence that this has ever happened in practice. The justification for only 75% being required rather than a full 100% seems to have been that some workplaces or colleges were unable to offer certain opportunities, and that the trainee should not be disadvantaged because of this. However, the experience of the City and Guilds six-sector projects shows that this notional 75% is not good enough to satisfy the requirements of validating bodies such as City and Guilds, nor likely to satisfy NCVQ. Thus, in future, for trainees to be credited with being fully competent on a module, they must have demonstrated competence in all statements at level IV (i.e. competent unaided). Only statements which are essential to the module should appear, though a category of optional module competence statements covering what 'the trainee may be required to do' can appear on the bottom of some modules for which achievement at level IV will not be necessary. For a trainee to be credited with any other level for a module on the YTS Certificate, such as 'competent under general supervision', he or she

must have achieved at that level or above for all statements. There was still some discontent with this; some have argued that trainees can only be competent at level IV. While they may be able to carry out tasks under general supervision, this does not mean they are competent. It has now been agreed by the partners that 'competence' should no longer be used for levels I-III.

Certification

In order to achieve the aim of offering 'credible certification' through their unit credit transfer system, the MainFrame partners have had to ensure that the modules articulate with existing national qualifications. This has been by modularising a wide range of vocational courses, encompassing BTEC, City and Guilds, and RSA.

In addition, as increasing numbers of nationally preferred schemes come into existence, it is important that the MainFrame system assimilates those which link to approved qualifications with NCVQ accreditation. There is some criticism of this on the grounds that the rewriting of nationally preferred schemes to fit the MainFrame format is unnecessary, since if trainees in the schemes simply followed the nationally preferred schemes, the use of MainFrame modules would be unnecessary. As outlined in the FEU's *Interim Report*, the arguments against this, however, are:

- MainFrame is committed to establishing a common framework for assessing occupational competence; this is axiomatic for its existence.
- Awarding 'dispensations' for various schemes not to use a common format would result in a mess and a strong centripetal tendency in the project.
- The project is seeking to establish a unit credit transfer system, and any such system requires a common currency. In MainFrame this currency lies in the modular format, whereas no common currency yet exists for the approved qualifications.
- The MainFrame modular form facilitates the design and delivery of training programmes which integrate a comprehensive range of programme purposes, clear level of attainment, personal effectiveness, core skills, and so on, to meet individual trainee requirements and possibilities for progression; but the same is not yet true of nationally preferred materials.
- MainFrame assessment procedures allow for progressive formative assessment of trainees' performance and are considerably more compact and flexible in use than some nationally preferred scheme materials.
- A common format greatly eases the development of staff skills in the design and implementation of programmes.

In addition, it is now becoming apparent that not all nationally preferred schemes are being well received locally for a range of reasons, and on occasions the MainFrame programmes appear more acceptable. An example of this is in the area of hotel and catering. One northern brewery has looked to the nationally preferred scheme (Caterbase) for the basis of its staff training, but has decided to become an associate member of the MainFrame project in order to access the MainFrame modules.

The City and Guilds six-sector project has also had concrete outcomes in terms of certification. The City and Guilds Skills Testing Service now offers certificates to trainees using work-based units from the MainFrame modular training scheme in the following areas:

- Care Assistant Working with Mentally Ill Clients
- Care Assistant Working with Children
- Electronic Service Engineer
- Data Input Clerk
- Sports Centre Attendant
- Health Club Assistant
- Sales Assistant
- Warehouse Assistant

Further awards are expected for Care Assistants Working with the Elderly, Playworkers, Outdoor Recreation Assistants, Freight Forwarding Clerks and Pharmacy Assistants.

FEU commentary

The task that the MainFrame partners have set themselves with respect to the establishment of a unit credit transfer system, with related assessment and certification, has been an ambitious project and, given the uncertainty in terms of national developments (NCVQ and the products of nationally preferred schemes), has made a major investment of resources in a particular direction. In the *Interim Report* it was noted that the MainFrame modular structure was not inconsistent with the direction NCVQ was likely to take. NCVQ has not made much progress since the publication of the *Interim Report*. Meanwhile, the MainFrame project has continued along its path towards unit credit transfer, reviewing and rationalising its bank of modules in light of both the research findings of the FEU and the

developments that emerged from the City and Guilds six-sector project. This has tightened up the assessment procedures carried out by staff, and has led to the issue of certificates for workplace assessed modules, or credits towards such certificates.

There are still problems, however. The amount of paperwork has not yet been significantly reduced. In some ways, the introduction of the *Training Inventory* as a central record will – at least in the short term – increase the paperwork for agency staff. As modules are rationalised and made more relevant, attention needs to focus on other aspects of the training scheme. The assessment of personal effectiveness, shown to be a problem in the first year of the evaluation, has been substantially revised, and appears to be much better received by staff, trainees, employers and workplace supervisors. Core skills, however, continue to be a problem. The language, format and purpose of the project's checklist, a derivative of that used in CPVE, is criticised for lack of relevance and comprehensibility. Furthermore, it would appear from the Liaison Officer survey that the modules are not particularly useful for the identification and assessment of transferable skills. Finally, the demands of nationally preferred schemes has increasingly posed problems for the project. Some of them, such as the Hairdressing Training Board, Caterbase and the ABC, fit quite well from the curricula point of view, with existing and new MainFrame modules. The Road Transport Industrial Training Board's preferred scheme was assimilated by MainFrame, but with some difficulty. Other schemes, such as the Construction Industry Training Board's and the Engineering Industry Training Board's, fit uneasily alongside MainFrame modules. For those who have to deliver the scheme – particularly college tutors teaching the nationally preferred scheme to other students and trainees in the same class as MainFrame trainees, the lack of fit and duplication of paperwork is a major concern.

The assessment and certification procedures being developed within the MainFrame project are complex. FEU research has shown great variation in practice. The project is attempting to bring about more standardisation, but at the same time retain as much flexibility as possible. This has both organisational and staff development implications which will provide the focus of the next project bulletin.

Information

This bulletin is the sixth in a series which provides information about the development of the collaborative project and its evaluation. Copies of the first five are still available.

For details of how to obtain these bulletins and other FEU documents, please contact the FEU Information Centre, telephone 01-321 0433 ext. 236.

Information about the FEU evaluation of two-year YTS in the three LEAs and about other FEU work in relation to the YTS may be obtained from: Stuart McCoy, FEU, Room 1/7, 2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE

A Modular Training Framework for Credit Accumulation & Transfer

Trainee Name _____ Started _____ Completed _____

Location (indicate whether OJT or PWE) _____

Module Title: **Communicating with parents/professional colleagues**

Levels: 2/3. Purposes: RE SD T. Source: D. Qualification:

On successful completion, the trainee will be able to:
communicate with parents and professional colleagues.

MAIN FRAME

C-105

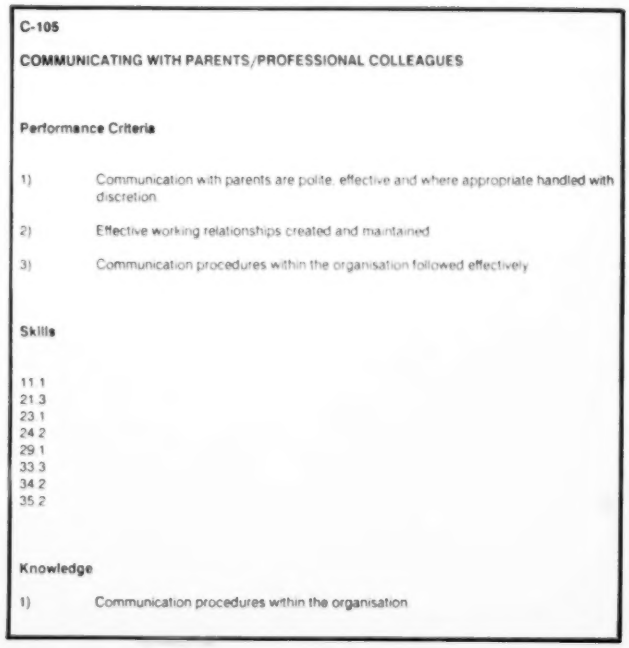
	The Trainee is required to:	I	II	III	IV	Where & how shown
1	follow procedures of organisation					
2	communicate with staff					
3	develop good working relationships with domestic staff					
4	attend staff meetings					
5	communicate with parents/guardians					
6	liaise with parents/guardians					
7	encourage parent/guardian participation					
8	exercise discretion re. children/school matters					
9	work as a member of a team					
	If The Trainee may be required to:					
10	Act as interpreter					

Brief description of work tasks, assignments and projects undertaken and assessed:

A _____
B _____
C _____
D _____
E _____

Key to performance:
I Needs further experience to be competent.
II Competent under close supervision.
III Competent under general supervision.
IV Competent unaided & able to assist others.

Tutor _____ Supervisor _____ Trainee _____



C-105

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES

Performance Criteria

1) Communication with parents are polite, effective and where appropriate handled with discretion

2) Effective working relationships created and maintained

3) Communication procedures within the organisation followed effectively

Skills

11.1
21.3
23.1
24.2
29.1
33.3
34.2
35.2

Knowledge

1) Communication procedures within the organisation

Figure 1: A Modular Framework for Credit Accumulation and Transfer

MODULAR PROGRAMME TRAINING INVENTORY

A Modular Training Framework for Credit Accumulation & Transfer

MAIN FRAME

TRAINEE NAME

PROGRAMME TITLE

TOC CATEGORY AND CODE

START DATE FINISHING DATE

OFF THE JOB TRAINING PROVIDER(S)

1

2

3

REVIEW SCHEDULE

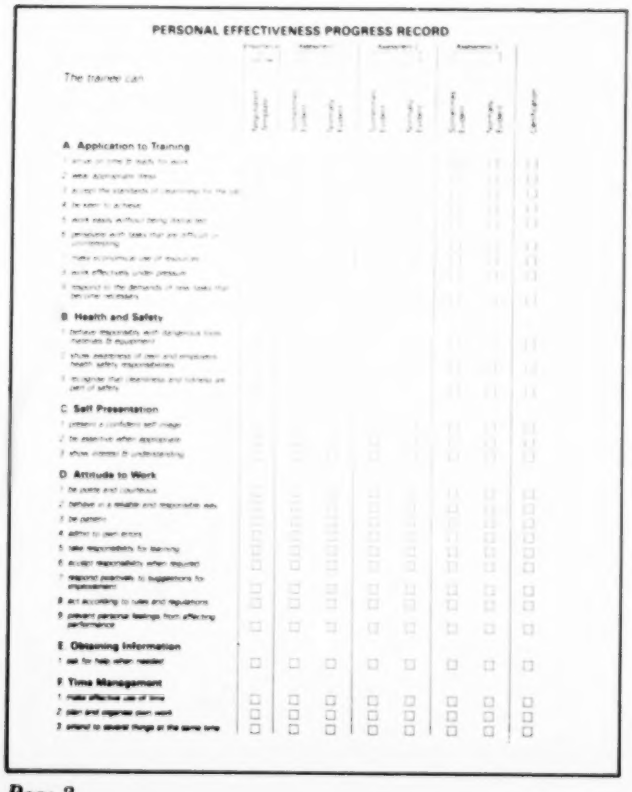
YEAR ONE			YEAR TWO		
TYPE OF REVIEW	DATES EXPECTED	ACTUAL	TYPE OF REVIEW	DATES EXPECTED	ACTUAL

Page 1

RECORD OF MODULES COVERED

CORE SKILLS CHECK LIST

Page 2



PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRESS RECORD

The trainee can

A Application to Training

B Health and Safety

C Self Presentation

D Attitude to Work

E Obtaining Information

F Time Management

Page 3

WORK PLACEMENT DETAILS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	DATE STARTED	DATE FINISHED
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

OTHER RELEVANT TRAINING INFORMATION

QUALIFICATIONS

TITLE OF QUALIFICATION	AWARDING BODY	RESULT

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY USED

Type of module	Programme Purpose	Level of module
Gen = General	IA = Initial assessment	1 = Pre vocational
Gmc = Generic	FE = Foundation of Education	2 = Part Craft
Voc = Vocational	RE = Role execution	3 = Full Craft, Part technician
	TP = Theory underlying practice	4 = Full technician
	SD = Skills Development	
	T = Transfer	
	INT = Integration	

Page 4

Figure 2: Modular Programme Training Inventory